

To: Superintendents, Principals, and School Safety Specialists
From: Lisa Truitt, State Attendance Officer and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Wellness Specialist
Steve Balko, Director of School Building Security
Date: December 25, 2020
RE: Guidance on What Schools and Districts Should Do If a Home Visit is Needed

The health and wellness of students is our top priority and that includes their social, emotional, and physical health. It is critical that educators have frequent contact with every student during virtual learning to ensure someone is checking in on them. If an educator is unable to make contact with a student, they should attempt to make contact with their parent or guardian. If the wellbeing of a student is still unknown, schools and districts may decide to conduct a wellness check visit. Before and during this visit, the following steps should be taken:

- Attempt to contact the student, the parent, or guardian to notify them of the visit. When possible, the individual(s) contacting the student, parent, or guardian should do so in the family's native language. If contact is made with the family, it must be stressed to the family that the purpose of the visit is to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of the student and is not regarding immigration status or other legal issues.
- Any individual(s) making a home visit should wear face coverings while visiting. Face coverings may include masks, bandanas, or any other object that covers the nose and mouth. Individuals who are ill may not conduct wellness visits.
- Social distancing must be followed.
- If contact is made, the individual(s) making contact should inquire about why the student has not been in contact and determine what resources and supports they may need i.e. technology, food, mental health resources, etc.
- The individual(s) making a wellness check should verify the best contact information for the student, as well as a parent or guardian to set up a follow-up call to help get the student back on track.
- Before leaving, the individual(s) making a wellness check should reassure the student and/or parent or guardian that they are there to support and assist them during these unprecedented times.

We must recognize that student wellbeing extends beyond learning and nutrition; we must also focus on the mental/emotional wellbeing of our students. Everyone should report abuse or neglect. The reporting and investigating of suspected child abuse and neglect are not discretionary matters. They are required by law (IC 31-33-5-1). The Indiana Department of Child Services hotline is 1800-800-5556.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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